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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [SENV](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR APRIL

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In April the Government of Colombia (GOC) aerielly eradicated 10,630 hectares of coca and manually eradicated another 1,607 hectares of coca and 48 hectares of poppy. The Colombian National Police (CNP) seized 7.46 metric tons of cocaine HCl and coca base, 11.50 metric tons of marijuana, and 17 kilos of heroin. They also captured 781.40 metric tons of precursor chemicals. END SUMMARY

AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

2. (SBU) In April, the aerial eradication program sprayed 10,630 hectares of coca. AT-802s operating from Larandia, Tumaco, and Barrancabermeja sprayed 3,759, 5,569, and 1,302 hectares, respectively. This brings the year-to-date total to 43,109 hectares of coca sprayed. Eradication aircraft were involved in seven hostile fire incidents resulting in ten impacts. This year there have been eighteen incidents and 48 impacts.

3. (SBU) For the first time in the program's history all three forward operating locations (FOLs) have standardized their spray packages, and each are using four or five AT-802s and their accompanying helicopter support. Year-to-date the Tumaco FOL has sprayed more than 25,000 hectares and has concentrated its efforts on the coca rich Rio Patia area. The Barrancabermeja FOL has concentrated its efforts on the Serrania de San Lucas area of southern Bolivar, which has been a traditional stronghold of an illegal armed group. These eradication efforts have been part of a coordinated effort of the GOC to wrest control from the armed groups that have controlled these areas.

MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

4. (SBU) Due to numerous security incidents, two GME deployment delays, and overly optimistic initial planning, the GOC is severely behind schedule in meeting its manual eradication goal of 100,000 hectares. In April, there was limited GME activity. The GMEs were supposed to have returned from leave on the 15th, but "Accion Social" did not receive their budget allocation in time and the deployment was postponed until early May. In fact, the MOD had to transfer the equivalent of almost \$30 million dollars to "Accion Social" for manual eradication. For April, the GOC reported that its forces manually eradicated 1,607 hectares of coca and 48 hectares of opium poppy - bringing the year-to-date totals to 18,662 hectares of coca, 167 hectares of opium poppy, and 12 hectares of marijuana. GMEs continued their work along the Ecuador border in

Putumayo and Narino. On the 30th one civilian eradicator was killed and another injured by a mine explosion in Puerto Asis, Putumayo. On the 25th a few GME groups began operating in Vista Hermosa, Meta. There are plans to have as many as ten GMEs operating there in support of the Center for Integrated Action (CCAI, by its Spanish acronym). CCAI is an inter-agency (USAID, MLGRP and NAS) supported project in which the GOC plans to bring a full array of government services to the area in an attempt to consolidate and solidify the territorial gains the Colombian Army has achieved there.

NATIONALIZATION

15. (SBU) The GOC and USG confirmed that October 1, will be the date the GOC assumes fuel costs for all NAS aircraft. The GOC also responded officially that it would like to lease and not take title of the eighteen UH-1N helicopters offered to it. Those helicopters were grounded from operations after April 30, pending the conclusion of the ongoing (lease) negotiations. NAS completed the title transfer for the four Colombian Air Force (COLAF) Schweitzer helicopters and one Colombian Navy (CONAV) Caravan airplane. NAS awaits the GOC to finalize the title transfer agreements for COLAR UH-1H helicopters at the flight training school in Melgar.

ENVIRONMENTAL

16. (SBU) In April, the interagency complaints committee received 52 new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops. Currently, there are 1,005 complaints pending (and a total of 8,042 complaints received since the program began). The committee admitted two complaints for future on-site verification, and remanded 120 for more information from the complainants. NAS paid \$13,000 USD to four complainants from Putumayo. Since the program began, NAS has compensated a total of 92 complaints for approximately \$475,000 USD.

An additional eighteen complaints have been approved for future compensation. The NAS complaints lawyer conducted three trainings with DIRAN for local leaders involved in the complaints process in the Departments of Antioquia, Narino, Bolivar, and Santander.

17. (SBU) NAS coordinated two events with Colombia's Foreign Ministry showcasing the environmental photo exhibit. On the 22nd, Foreign Minister Araujo (FM) hosted an Earth Day event at the Foreign Ministry to present the newly redesigned exhibit which illustrates the harmful environmental impact of illicit crops. On the 29th, the FM participated in the opening ceremony of the International Vallenato Festival in Valledupar. Participants included the city's Mayor, the Governor of Cesar, and the NAS Deputy Director. Araujo presented "Environmental Ambassador" awards at both events, which were widely covered by local press.

PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)

18. (SBU) In April PCHP aircraft flew a total 1,201.2 hours. Aircraft operating from Tumaco, Purificacion, Barrancabermeja, and Tolomaida continued to provide air assaults, air movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the CD Brigade and other vetted COLAR units. Air assaults continue to be effective in securing spray blocks for the eradication program and interdiction operations. PCHP accumulated 35.4 hours supporting ten medical evacuation flights that transported eighteen military and civilian personnel. Year-to-date PCHP aircraft have accumulated 150 flight hours supporting the GOC's manual eradication program.

19. (SBU) PCHP helicopter EJC-401 suffered an engine failure near Tumaco. No injuries were sustained when the crew landed the aircraft in a jungle clearing. The aircraft was later sling loaded to Tumaco by a COLAR MI-17 helicopter, air lifted to Bogota aboard a COLAF C-130 cargo aircraft and trucked to the CNP hangar at Guaymaral for repairs.

CNP AIR SERVICE (ARAVI) SUPPORT

¶10. (SBU) ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 1,616 mission hours. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks closed out the month with 126 flight hours. The manufacturer completed structural repairs on a UH-60 that had been grounded for a year. The aircraft should return to operational duties shortly.

¶11. (SBU) The Bell 212 fleet flew 184 mission hours. One aircraft is in the final stages of depot maintenance consisting of rewiring and night vision goggle compatibility upgrades, and should return to flight operations shortly. The Huey II fleet flew 840 hours. Five Huey II aircraft are down for depot maintenance. The ARAVI program continues using the acquired second structural jig to correct defects in the UH-II and Bell 212 aircraft. This should greatly increase the operational readiness (OR) rate in the coming months. The DC-3 fleet flew 364 hours. ARAVI awaits delivery of the first C-26 undergoing upgrades of intelligence gathering equipment at factory in the U.S. The estimated arrival date is September.

INTERDICTION

¶12. (SBU) During April the CNP seized 7.46 metric tons of cocaine HCl and coca base, 11.50 metric tons of marijuana, and 17 kilos of heroin. The CNP also destroyed sixteen cocaine HCl labs, 190 coca base labs, and captured 781.4 metric tons of precursor chemicals.

¶13. (SBU) On April 2, the Tulua airmobile company captured 592 kilos of cocaine hidden near El Plateado, Cauca. On the 5th, the DIRAN Cucuta Company destroyed an HCl lab along with 300 kilos of cocaine, 6,955 gallons of liquid precursors, and 550 kilos of solid precursors near Cucuta, Norte de Santander. On the 9th, the Santa Marta jungla company eradicated four hectares of marijuana (estimated to be 1.2 metric tons) near Cienaga, Magdalena. On the 10th, the Tulua judicial police captured three key narcotraffickers in Buenaventura. On the 16th, the Bogota Airmobile Company destroyed an HCl lab containing 517.5 kilos of cocaine, 323 kilos of coca base, 2,500 gallons of liquid precursors and 1.4 metric tons of solid precursor chemicals near Puerto Salgar, Cundinamarca. On the 24th, DIRAN captured three extraditables in Cali who were responsible for organizing a "go-fast" boat transportation system. On the 25th, the Bogota airmobile company destroyed a cocaine HCl lab in Mapiiripan, Meta containing 4,395 gallons of liquid and 6.4 metric tons of solid precursors. On the 27th, DIRAN intercepted 392 kilos of cocaine hidden in a taxi in Buenaventura.

¶14. (SBU) On-going training courses include the second eight week ODE (explosives and demolitions) course (with 40 students), the 21-week combat medic course (with 40 students), and the 18-week jungla international course with 107 students, including 18 from other countries in the Americas. Jungla instructors also conducted training seminars for thirteen EMCAR squadrons that are supporting manual eradication. These seminars are designed to reduce the casualties and fatalities of manual eradicators and security personnel. Finally, jungla instructors trained 130 Colombian United Nations manual eradication supervisors. The five-day course included classes on patrolling, survival, explosives, weapons, land navigation, and combat first aid.

PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)

¶15. (SBU) In April DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) unit seized 2.4 tons of cocaine at the Port of Buenaventura, 125 kilos of cocaine at the Port of Cartagena, 125 kilos of cocaine at the Port of Uraba, 130 kilos of cocaine, five kilos of heroin and 38 kilos of marijuana at the Bogota airport, five kilos of cocaine and 36 kilos of marijuana at the Cali airport, and 21 kilos of cocaine at the airport of Pereira. Two U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) canine experts, one assigned to NAS-Peru and the other from the CBP Front Royal canine academy performed an assessment of all of the canine assets at the international air and seaports on the North Coast.

¶16. (SBU) The DIRAN polygraph unit conducted polygraph exams on 41 members of the DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) unit in

support of several internal affairs investigations. Twenty-seven passed the exam, eleven failed, and three were inconclusive. Four members of the polygraph unit received training on counter-intelligence polygraph techniques.

AIR BRIDGE DENIAL (ABD)

¶17. (SBU) The GOC sorted 6,859 tracks over Colombia in April of which four were declared "unknown, assumed suspect" (UAS). The GOC responded to all UAS aircraft. Two were located and visually identified, and the information was passed on to Central American law enforcement agencies. Guatemalan authorities impounded one of these after it landed. The pilot escaped, but 459 kilos of cocaine were seized.

COLOMBIAN ARMY COUNTERDRUG (CD) BRIGADE

¶18. (SBU) The CD Brigade 1st and 3rd battalions continued supporting both aerial and manual eradication efforts and conducting interdiction operations from operational bases in Tumaco, Narino and Barrancabermeja, Santander. The 2nd battalion conducted light infantry and air assault training from San Jose del Guaviare. In April the Brigade carried out counternarcotics operations against the FARC's 1st and Mahecha Fronts and the Daniel Aldana Mobil Column in Narino, Guaviare, and Bolivar. The Brigade secured a total of 6,828 hectares during eradication operations and 48 hectares during manual eradication. The Brigade destroyed one HCl lab, nine coca base labs, one enemy cache, 4,265 gallons of liquid coca, 6,782 gallons of liquid precursors, 2,509 kilos of solid precursors, 1,075 kilos of freshly picked coca leaf, 1,625 kilos of coca leaf in-process, and 120,000 coca seedlings.

REESTABLISH POLICE PRESENCE PROGRAM (CARABINEROS)

¶19. (SBU) In response to the murder of two policemen in Antioquia, CNP Director General Naranjo ordered the formation of a task force (bloque de busqueda, in Spanish) to apprehend Daniel Rendon (alias 'Don Mario'). The multi-directorate operation included two carabinero squadrons that were deployed to the area to conduct area control and search operations. So far during the operation, the carabineros have seized one ton of cocaine along with 22 kilos of heroin.

¶20. (SBU) Carabineros in Putumayo captured sixteen members of a new emerging criminal group (BACRIM in Spanish) known as "Rastrojos." The Cauca carabinero squadron captured seven members of the FARC's Jacobo Arena mobile column, and the Antioquia carabineros captured another five combatants from the FARC's 18th Front. Other operational highlights include three enemy combatants killed in action and 240 captured (17 narcotraffickers, 20 FARC/ELN, 38 BACRIM and 165 common criminals). Additionally, the EMCAR seized 234 weapons, 159 grenades, 260 kilograms of explosives, 5,389 gallons of liquid precursors, 6,083 kilos of solid precursors, 287 kilos of coca base and 196 kilos of marijuana. They also recovered 39 vehicles and destroyed 19 coca base labs.

BASE SECURITY/ROAD INTERDICTION

¶21. (SBU) On the 17th, the ninth carabinero-specific base defense "train-the-trainer" course graduated fifty students. Preparations are ongoing for the next month-long base defense course which will take place in the Gulf of Uraba region of Antioquia. The course will address upgrades, renovations, and emerging security requirements at the antinarcotics base there.

NAVY TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT (GRUIN)

¶22. (SBU) In April the COLNAV tactical intelligence unit (GRUIN) participated in Operation Power Play, which was supported by

JIATF-S, NAS, DEA, and the British government. During the operation the unit infiltrated and verified a number of targets as well as seized approximately 1.3 tons of cocaine. The operation temporarily expanded the unit's operational capability to extend itself. Also in April, twelve GRUIN Commandos completed the requisite COLNAV intelligence course.

INDIVIDUAL DESERTER PROGRAM

¶23. (SBU) In April a total of 207 individuals deserted from Colombian terrorist organizations. Since the program began in August of 2002, a total of 15,575 individuals have deserted. Of this number, almost 9,400 deserted from the FARC. Deserters continue to provide invaluable information that has led many major police and military successes.

COMMUNICATIONS

¶24. (SBU) In April the DIRAN telematica office conducted communication training in Santa Marta and Tulua. This training was given to operational commandos, base personnel, and all radio operators. Training consisted of single channel radio wave theory, antenna theory, and practical application on all the radios in the CNP inventory. A team from telematica visited the Ports of Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Barranquilla to gather information exchange requirements to support a new software connectivity plan for the ports along the North Coast.

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION (DDR)

¶25. (U) The Direccion Nacional de Estupefacientes (DNE) reports that preparations for Colombia's first nationwide comprehensive drug survey in more than twelve years are on schedule and that it expects the preliminary results to be ready as early as October. The survey results will determine whether anecdotal evidence alleging increased drug consumption in Colombia is accurate. The project has USG funding.

MANAGEMENT SECTION

¶26. (U) In April NAS unified its dedicated internet network (DIN) users onto a single LAN dramatically improving mobility, interaction with in-house applications and simplifying system administration. The management section also shared position description information with NAS Mexico to assist in hiring locally engaged staff (LES) in the future.

BROWNFIELD